

Level 4 Information Handout 2015

At Vermont Primary School we aim to be nut free.
Please ensure that all food coming to school is free of nuts.
www.level4vps.wikispaces.com

Grade 5 Teachers :

John Hoskin, Sally Dyett, Alex Tredrea

Grade 6 Teachers:

Gillian Prentice (Level Coordinator), Paul Souter, Jaclyn Raditsis

Responsibilities

- It is our aim to encourage the students to be responsible for their learning by completing their tasks on time.
- Children should take everything they need into class at the beginning of the day, after recess and after lunch.
- Students are required to be punctual. A teacher is on yard duty at 8:45AM. Please do not you're your child to school before 8:30AM. Students must be at school by 8.55am. If a child arrives after 9am they are to sign in through the office.
- Children need to learn to deal with problems that may arise from time to time. If you have any issues please clarify them first with your child's teacher.
- Children also need to be a reliable source of information about school activities. We are asking parents to please read all notes and diaries.
- Parents may use the diary to communicate with the teachers where required and vice-versa. Please sign and date any messages sent home by teachers to indicate that they have been read and we will do the same.
- Medical or absence notes need to be written on a piece of paper and not in the diary as they are filed.
- It would be appreciated if all notices could be returned A.S.A.P from being sent home.
- All notes that are to be returned to school will be sent home on pink paper.
- **Eating** – the children must eat their food in the allocated eating area if they have not finished eating in class.
- **Diaries** - this year students will be using their diaries to record important dates and due dates for school work and home reading. We expect the students to have their diaries at school each day.

Behaviour

- The children have discussed rules and expectations in and out of the classroom. They have decided that RESPECT is the only rule needed. It was also decided that one warning ONLY will be given if students break rules. Following this, depending on the nature of the issue, students may be unable to attend excursions or incursions if they break the rules.

Homework

- Homework is in the form of a Semester Grid. A set amount is due fortnightly on a Thursday. Students have 10 days to complete tasks.
- They are expected to complete the homework in their homework books and record all reading in their diaries. Generally, 10 reading entries are expected. We ask that you sign these each homework period and also sign their homework book.
- The children are given a score out of 10 and once they reach a total of 50 points, they are allowed to have a free 10 day period of no homework. However, they are still expected to read and record their reading.
- We understand that some children have a busy schedule outside of school with sporting commitments or extra-curricular activities. This is the purpose for the homework being stretched over 10 days.
- If there are circumstances where your child is unable to complete the homework, for example, a death or extreme illness, please communicate this directly with your child's teacher. Sports training, birthday parties, sleep overs etc are unacceptable excuses for not completing homework on time.

English

READING (Australian Curriculum refers to this as Reading and Viewing)

- **Lexile Reading**
 - This year VPS will continue using the Lexile reading program for students reading above Level 1. At the beginning of each term, students will sit an online reading test at school that will provide them with a Lexile reading level. They will then be able to target the books they borrow from the library for Home Readers, as well as for enjoyment, more accurately. All books in the VPS library have been allocated a Lexile level where possible.
- **At school the Middle Years Approach and CAFÉ Program is used**
 - Whilst we continue to follow the Middle Years Approach, we have also linked our Literacy Instruction with a program called CAFÉ (Gail Boushey and Joan Moser). This is a program based on current research about developing proficient readers. The acronym represents the four components of successful reading: Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding Vocabulary. Teachers and students work together to set goals and document learning and growth. It is a structured program that aims to build reading stamina, foster independence and develop a love of reading in students.
 - The students will complete activities targeted at their Individual Learning Goals, therefore, not all students complete the same activities during the week.
 - In the Reading and Viewing Time there will be a Guided Reading Group, a Follow-up Activity Group (an activity linked to the Guided Reading book being studied) and independent groups focusing on comprehension, phonics and grammar.
 - The purpose of the Guided Reading books is to practise reading strategies taught under the guidance of a teacher as well as focus on deepening their understanding of the text. Whilst students read in ability groups and read texts that are appropriate and suitably challenging to their level of reading, at times they will also be grouped in relation to their individual goal at the time eg, analysing author's purpose, comparing and contrasting. This assists the students to understand the text at an in-depth level.

WRITING

- **Each year we study different genres**
 - Narrative

- Report
- Poetry
- Persuasive / Exposition
- Recount
- **We use a mixture of the middle years approach with writing and whole group focus**
 - Teacher would sit with one group and really focus and guide the children as they work.
 - Other children will be completing their work independently.
 - Come back together at the end to share our work.
- **The lessons start with an introductory activity aimed at improving writing skills –sentence beginnings, words we could use instead of repeating ‘and then’ etc.**
- **At the end of the session, children are asked to reread their work and edit it**
 - Editing involves spelling and grammatical errors. There is also a focus on punctuation and paragraphing.
 - Not every piece of writing is published into a good copy.
- **ICT and Writing**
 - The students have the opportunity to create multimodal texts in class and during the ICT specialist time.
 - These texts look at various modes such as sound and movement.

SPELLING / REASONING and WRITING

- **Spelling Mastery**
 - Spelling Mastery is a 6 level spelling series designed primarily for students in grades 1 through to 6.
 - It is designed to develop students’ spelling skills through 3 strategies (interwoven)
 - Phonemic
 - For beginners
 - Teaches students predictable spellings for different sounds.
 - Eg. mat, sat, fat
 - Morphographic
 - For more advanced spellers
 - The program teaches them to spell meaningful units of words (prefixes, bases, suffixes) and combine them to make multisyllabic words
 - Eg. Prefix – re, dis, un // Base – cover pute // Suffix – ed, able = many combinations of those combine to make over 20 words eg coverable, covered, discover, discoverable, discovered
 - The whole-word approach
 - Approach used at all levels to teach common words that cannot be taught with phonemic or morphographic strategies
 - Eg. thought, through
 - How it runs
 - Students are assessed and placed into groups based on their current spelling ability. A / B / C / D etc
 - Each group meets for approximately 30m for 4 days a week and there is a Spelling Test every 5th lesson
- **Reasoning and Writing**
 - Reasoning and Writing is an extension program for the children that have completed the Spelling Mastery Program and are efficient spellers. This program teaches thinking skills that produce good writing. Higher level thinking is integrated with writing instruction to help students express ideas efficiently and effectively.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Throughout the year they are also required to present talks to the grade. This may be a homework requirement.
- There is also a focus during reading – the ability to retell what they have read in sequence, answer a question, explain their point of view etc
- Speaking and Listening focusses on turn taking, retelling in order, linking events, cause and effect, expressing ourselves clearly, following instructions, eye contact, fluency, expression, body language and changing the way we speak depending on who we are speaking to.

Maths

This year all students in Years 1 to 6 will be placed in targeted learning groups for learning Number and Algebra within the curriculum level. This will enable their learning to be targeted and extended more efficiently. Each teacher in the level will be assigned to one group that they will be teaching for the semester. Students will have three lessons a week addressing Number and Algebra.

Two lessons per week will be allocated to the learning of Applied Maths (Measurement and Geometry or Probability and Statistics). These lessons will take place the students' own classrooms with their class teacher. The teachers will continue to work closely together to ensure each students' needs are met.

This year each student at Vermont Primary School will have a Mathletics account. This will further the use of Learning Technologies into the Mathematics curriculum.

- Through lots of research we know a few fundamental truths about how students learn. The Middle Years Numeracy Program is based around these ideas and as a level we incorporate it into our lessons.
- Maths lessons no longer run as a whole class. **All students learn in different ways** therefore consideration is given to strengths, weaknesses and different learning styles. We split students into different groups (as in literacy) and they work with the teacher, hands on, computer, playing maths games and book work.
- As with Middle Years Literacy the focus is on partner and group work as research shows that **students learn from and with other students**. They can share strategies, successes and failures. They see that there are lots of ways to solve similar problems. Through explaining their strategies, they are consolidating their own understanding.
- **Students learn when they feel good about themselves**. We place a large emphasis on games and open ended problems where all students can achieve success regardless of ability. For example instead of asking what is $12,610 + 350$ we will say the answer is 12,960 what equations can you make that equal 12, 960.
- The Australian Curriculum Strand for Mathematics in Grade 5 and 6 are:
 - **Number and Algebra** – Number and Place Value, Fractions and Decimals, Money and Finance, Patterns and Algebra
 - **Measurement and Geometry** – Units of Measurement, Shape, Location and Transformation
 - **Statistics and Probability** – Chance, Data Representation and Interpretation

Special Mathematics Program – Mrs Renata Hannink

This program will involve selected students (teachers will select students based on need) from Years 3 and 5 during the first half of the year. In the second half of the year it will operate in Years 2 and 4. The program will be dynamic and fluid, allowing for students to be involved for different periods of time according to their educational needs. You will be informed if your child will be attending the Specialist Maths Program.

Inquiry

- Inquiry includes History, Geography, Sociology and Science.
- The question we are looking at this term is *Does History Make Us Who We Are* with a focus on Australian History.
- It is also integrated into other curriculum areas including English and Mathematics where possible.
- Some units will have incursions and excursions.
- Any excursions notices must be handed in two days before the excursion or they will not be able to go. They will however be expected at school where they will join another class.
- As we transition into the Australian Curriculum, AusVELS, Vermont Primary School will be updating and changing some of the Inquiry topics. This will be a gradual process over the next 2 years and more information will be available through the School Newsletter.

Science

- To support the Science Curriculum being covered in class the students have access to the Science Lab once a fortnight for thorough experiments and investigations.
- The topics covered this year in level 4 will be:
 - Chemical Sciences – Mystery Powders (year 5) and Matter Changes (year 6).
 - Physical Sciences – Now you See It (year 5) and Switched On (year 6).
 - Earth and Space Sciences – Natural Disasters
 - Biological Sciences – Antarctica, life cycles and adaption

NAPLAN

- **Timing – 12th , 13th and 14th of May**
- **Process** – NAPLAN is completed over three days covering Language Conventions and Writing, both are 40 minute sessions on the first day. Reading is on the next day for 45 minutes and Mathematics the following day also for 45 minutes.
- **The Writing** genre for 2014 will either be persuasive or narrative.
- **Results** - arrive late in Term 3 early Term 4. There is a vast amount of assessment to process as these tests are administered nation-wide in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.
- There is an information brochure that is sent home to parents around the testing time, which will answer many, if not all, of your queries.
- It is important to note that NAPLAN results, whilst they do indicate standards of knowledge and skills, they are a snapshot of how your children perform on a given task on a given day, as opposed to the knowledge your child's teacher will have after six or twelve months of working with every day. Teacher assessments as presented in June and December reports are based on extended and

moderated evaluations of your child's learning, using many different methods over a long period of time.

- The following website presents information regarding NAPLAN for parents including previous tests:
 - <http://www.naplantest.com.au/>
- The websites below contain information for parents about the NAPLAN tests.
 - http://www.naplan.edu.au/parents/parent_information_page.html
 - http://www.naplan.edu.au/tests/tests_landing_page.html
 - <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/prep10/naplan/testing/testpapers.html>

CAMPS

- Grade 5 students will be attending a 2 night camp at Sovereign Hill from 25th February to the 27th February.
- Grade 6 students will be attending a 4 night camp in Canberra from 23rd March to the 27th March.